

BCRC Work Program for FY 2018

Solid Waste Projects

Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance: The BCRC is under contract with the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance to assist in implementing parts of the Alliance Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) adopted by the Alliance and approved by VT ANR in 2015. The contract specifies that BCRC will complete the following tasks specified in the SWIP:

- **Program Administration:** Organize Alliance meetings, providing overall management, applying for and managing grants, managing contracts, and other organizational tasks. Work with the Alliance to foster sharing services between towns. Participate in training in solid waste management. Represent the Alliance at solid waste meetings.
- **General Actions:** Calculate and report on disposal and diversion rates. Oversee maintenance of the Alliance web site. Maintain records from towns on hauler contact information and services.
- **Recycling Actions:** Work with the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) to prioritize businesses for outreach. NERC is under contract to BCRC, and this contract will be expanded to implement a recently received grant for business outreach. Provide materials on textile recycling programs through the website and multimedia campaign.
- **Organics Actions:** Work with NERC to prioritize businesses for food scrap outreach. Work with the Alliance, haulers and transfer stations to increase acceptance of leaf and yard waste.
- **Household Hazardous Waste:** Work with the VT Environmental Assistance Office to provide support for handling HHW/CEG wastes. Schedule and publicize one HHW/CEG event at the Bennington Transfer Station and manage one event for the Northshire.
- **Sludge:** Discuss how sludge is disposed with sewage treatment plant operators. Provide information on sludge disposal to septic system servicing businesses.
- **Construction and Demolition Actions:** Assist the Alliance in assuring clean wood disposal is available to all residents and businesses. Assist the Alliance in developing collection points for asphalt shingles.
- **Multi-media Program:** Implement a multimedia program to provide information to businesses, residents and institutions on the Universal Recycling Law requirements including landfill bans and disposal options for HHW, organics, recyclables, construction and demolition debris and sludge.
- **Other Programs:** Subcontract with NERC for outreach to 10% of schools, 2% of businesses, and provide outreach on materials management for events, on an annual basis.

Integrated Solid Waste Applications Program: Continue to review billings from Casella Waste Management, invoice towns, and pay for Casella services for Arlington, Dorset, Manchester, Sandgate and Sunderland. If the towns enter into a formal agreement with BCRC to do so, work with the towns and Casella on a revised contract for services.

Emergency Management Projects

Local Emergency Operation Plan (LEOP) updates: The BCRC will continue to work with towns to ensure that all LEOPs are updated annually and available for use by each town.

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP): The BCRC will continue to work with towns to complete hazard mitigation plans and to submit them to FEMA for approval. In addition to seeing recently completed plans through the approval process, the BCRC will develop new or updated HMPs with the following towns: Arlington, Manchester Village, North Bennington Village, Sunderland, and Glastenbury (HMGP projects). Integrate information and data collected during development of these plans with EMPG-funded work on new HMPs for Manchester, Pownal, and Bennington. Flood resiliency and stormwater actions, assessment of threats from forest insect pests, and economic development planning relevant to hazard mitigation will be considered in new HMPs.

LEPC Support: The BCRC will continue to provide staff support to Local Emergency Planning Committee 7 as needed according to the BCRC-LEPC 7 agreement.

Exercises: The BCRC will assist with exercises run by Vermont Department of Emergency Management as needed, and will provide staff support for statewide emergency response, including assistance at the State Emergency Operations Center.

Training for local officials and staff: The BCRC will continue to disseminate information about trainings offered around the state and to schedule and coordinate local trainings for the LEPC 7, Emergency Management Directors, and Police, Fire, and Rescue Squad personnel.

Medical Reserve Corps: The BCRC will continue to assist the Southwestern Vermont MRC as needed.

LEPC Membership: The BCRC will be working with LEPC 7 to reach out to members from towns, Tier II facilities, commercial enterprises, utilities, transportation, colleges, schools, nonprofits and other organizations to attend and participate in LEPC meetings and activities.

ERCAF Assistance: The BCRC will continue to assist and support municipalities as they meet Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund requirements.

Local Liaison: The BCRC will continue to be the local liaison after severe weather events and will collect damage information for Vermont Emergency Management.

Red Cross Disaster Action Team: The BCRC will work with the Red Cross to help develop a Bennington Area Disaster Action Team.

Transportation Projects

Applegate – Willow Brook Path: This new path will connect two large housing developments to give residents from the 104-unit Applegate Apartments complex a safe route to walk to school and other important destinations. The BCRC completed a feasibility study and will continue to work as local project manager to assist the town, development owners, and community groups during project construction. The BCRC will be the local manager for that design/build project. Construction is expected in 2017.

Kocher Drive Multi-use Path Project: This project is to design, permit, and construct a multi-use path along VT7A/Kocher Drive, which will provide a safe route across Route 7 at the intersection with Kocher Drive. The BCRC is the local project manager during the engineering and construction phases of the project. Construction is expected in 2017.

Sunderland Safe Roads: Follow up on a recently completed scoping study that evaluates alternatives for improving bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety along Sunderland Hill Road and Hill Farm Road.

The town has applied for a Bike-Ped program grant for construction of improvements along one section of the roadway; if the grant is received, the BCRC will provide local project management assistance during the design and construction phases.

Bennington to North Bennington “Ninja Path”: A section of this project, between the Hannaford Plaza and Harmon Road, is now funded by a \$1.1 million VTrans Bicycle-Pedestrian Program grant. The BCRC serves as the local project manager for the project, and will oversee the engineering, permitting, and construction (expected in 2019).

Ninja Path: Interim Path BCRC is serving as the project manager for construction of an interim unpaved path for public use while the federally funded path section is developed, a process that typically takes 3-7 years. Tasks include ROW, permitting, and design. Implementation was started in 2016 and will continue through 2017.

North Bennington Main Street Sidewalk Improvements: The BCRC is serving as the local project manager for a design/build project involving replacement and addition of sidewalks along Main Street in North Bennington Village. Right-of-way documents have been obtained and certification is pending. The Village has applied for additional grant funding needed to complete the project. Design will be completed in 2017 and construction anticipated in 2018, if the supplemental grant funds are secured.

North Bennington Depot Roof Repair: The BCRC is serving as local project manager for a Transportation Alternative Program funded project that will effect needed repairs to the roof of the historic train depot in the village.

Potential Bike-Ped Projects: The BCRC has helped the Town of Dorset apply for funding for a scoping study that will look at needed pedestrian improvements in Dorset and East Dorset Villages. The BCRC will assist with the development of alternatives and will serve as local project manager if this project is funded.

Benmont Avenue Active Transportation Corridor: The BCRC is the local project manager for a project to design, permit, and construct a safe and inviting corridor for walking, running, and bicycling along Benmont Avenue in Bennington. Improvements include an on-street multi-use path, improved access management and landscaping.

Potential Local Transportation Projects: Projects that the BCRC will work on during FY 2017 depending on funding availability.

Arlington Recreation Park Pedestrian Access: The BCRC and a consultant developed a scoping study for a safe walking route linking the Arlington Public Schools and the Arlington Recreation Park. The town has applied for a VTrans grant to design, permit and construct the project.

Public Transit Needs: The BCRC will continue to work with VTrans, municipal officials, colleges, and business interests to implement a plan to provide direct shuttle bus service from Manchester and Bennington to the Amtrak rail station in Rensselaer, NY. The BCRC also will support coordination between interested parties, and provide assistance with issues related to development of bus stop facilities and integration with other transportation modes.

North Street Area Infrastructure Study: The BCRC will complete a planning study of North Street in Bennington, between County Street and Kocher Drive – the plan will include recommendations for improvements to the corridor that will enhance the streetscape/entrance to downtown while also improving pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety.

Codes & Standards Outreach: The BCRC will conduct outreach to municipalities to explain the benefits of adopting the latest codes and standards, a prerequisite for receiving FEMA Public Assistance and mitigation funding.

General Outreach and Training: Coordinate with VTrans to provide outreach and training to local officials and staff on a variety of programs as specified in the Transportation Planning Initiative work program.

Systemic Local Road Safety Program: Based on regional crash statistics and local knowledge, BCRC will identify three roadway segments of concern and invite the affected municipalities to participate in an effort to identify appropriate low-cost safety improvements.

Information and Data Gathering: Assist VTrans with the collection of data and information on traffic volumes, bike-ped use, park and ride counts, highway improvement data, municipal complete streets inventories, and other items as specified in the Transportation Planning Initiative work program.

Bridge and Culvert Inventories: The BCRC will update inventories of the region's transportation infrastructure and ensure that the data meets all reporting requirements. Assistance with development of related capital budgets and plans will be provided to local officials.

Way to Go Commuter Challenge: The BCRC will work with VEIC to promote the 2016 Way to Go program in the region.

Transportation System Resiliency: Cooperate with VTrans and other agencies to study and plan for a resilient transportation system.

Project Prioritization: Provide regional input on project prioritization efforts, including district leveling, village center and downtown improvements, and other projects.

Town Planning and Community Development Projects

Municipal Consultations and Plan Reviews: BCRC will consult with municipalities having plans that are due to expire within 12-24 months. These statutory consultations will be held with Shaftsbury, Stamford, and Woodford. The BCRC will continue to consult with and provide direct support for municipalities during the preparation of new/updated plans. Review municipal plans and render decisions on approval subject to statutory criteria.

Town Plan Updates: BCRC staff will work with Landgrove, Stamford, and Pownal on updates to their municipal plans, ensuring that all requirements are incorporated, including economic development, flood resilience, and village designation sections and maps. Review and approve plans per 24 VSA 4350 as warranted.

Land use regulations: Work with towns and villages as needed to update zoning and subdivision regulations with particular attention to developing consistency with approved local plans.

Bennington Housing: The BCRC will work cooperatively with the town, regional housing organizations, and NeighborWorks of Western Vermont (NWWVT) to study housing needs and opportunities in and around the center of Bennington and to support efforts to implement recommendations from the town's housing study. The BCRC will continue to participate in a project funded through SVMC to purchase distressed housing in the center of Bennington, and then rehabilitate and sell the homes to

people seeking to move to and work in Bennington. The BCRC will work with NWWVT to establish a strong regional presence for that homeownership agency in the region and to help expand their program offerings.

Energy Planning: The BCRC recently completed a new regional energy plan, designed to advance the state's energy goals, that includes a detailed analysis of preferred sites for new generation projects as well as specific strategies and projects that will lead to conservation and efficiency measures (space heating, electricity, and transportation).

The BCRC will provide technical assistance to municipalities seeking to prepare and adopt town energy plans that are consistent with "Act 174" energy planning requirements. It is expected that assistance will be provided to at least the following towns: Bennington, Sunderland, Dorset, Pownal, Manchester, Stamford, and Landgrove.

If the BCRC's regional plan and regional energy plan are approved by the Public Service Department as being consistent with Act 174 standards (determination of energy compliance), the BCRC will review, prepare findings, and act on submittals of municipal plans seeking a determination of energy compliance under Act 174.

Village Center and Downtown Designations: The BCRC will continue to work with municipalities to incorporate designation recommendations in their local plans and to prepare formal applications. Work will focus on Dorset/East Dorset, Manchester, Pownal (re-designation of three centers), and North Bennington Village (renewal).

Training for Local Officials: The BCRC will conduct training for local officials on topics where a need has been identified, to include at least: procedures for boards and commissions, energy planning and Section 248, housing and capital improvement planning, and other issues identified by local communities.

Special Projects: The BCRC will undertake special projects as opportunities and funding permit. One targeted project involves preparation of a regional cultural plan, involving communities and arts organizations from both the Northshire and Southshire.

Regional Economic Development Efforts:

BCIC Contract: Perform duties as articulated in Regional Development Corporation contract between the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Bennington County Industrial Corporation (BCIC). Activities to include business visitations, training program, workforce development initiatives, promotion of available industrial sites and participation in economic development projects of regional importance.

Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone/CEDS: Pursuant to the recommendations in the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone Report, work to build capacity in the Bennington region for doing regional economic development in anticipation of a partnership with the Windham Region to create a Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Work with local officials, regional and local business organizations, as well as with partners in Windham County to develop the Southern Vermont CEDS. The CEDS project will rely on US EDA funding and close coordination with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and the Windham Regional Commission (WRC). BCRC

staff will take a lead role in coordinating work among all project partners and supporting any consultant work.

Downtown Bennington Redevelopment: Work with a group of local investors on a major downtown Bennington redevelopment initiative. BCRC will work with the project developer and the Bennington Redevelopment Group to manage pre-development activities including design, funding procurement, and soliciting tenants for the project.

Workforce Development: BCRC will work to further a new internship program in the Bennington Region. For FY'18 this work will include internships with various target demographics and the linking of area interns with mentors through the Lightning Jar Co-working Space. The BCRC also will work with the regional school district to coordinate the annual career week activities.

Economic Development and Infrastructure: Provide support and coordination for identified village areas seeking assistance with identifying infrastructure solutions that will correct environmental and public health problems, allow for infill development, and the potential for mixed uses and levels of density consistent with local plan objectives.

VAPDA/DHCD Initiatives: Work with DHCD, other state agencies, and other RPCs on the following initiatives:

- Collaborative meetings with municipalities ready for state designation programs;
- Assisting municipalities in using the new Planning Manual;
- Damage assessments for business, agriculture, and cultural resources.
- Report on priority implementation actions identified in the Regional Plan.

Healthy Community Design Projects

Regional Food System: The BCRC will continue to work with Northshire Grows, Bennington College's CAPA food system group, and other partners to implement the local food system action plan that was developed by the BCRC and to advance recommendations from the recently completed Food Access Study for Bennington. An effort will be made to coordinate with and support similar efforts in the Manchester food hub area. Outreach to producers and identification of consumer needs will support efforts to define appropriate food system infrastructure in and around Bennington's downtown and growth center. Communication will be enhanced through development and distribution of a newsletter, regular meetings, and other activities. The BCRC will continue to work to support development of a retail food center in Bennington's downtown area (an identified "food desert").

Recreational Sites and Teen Center: The BCRC will work with the local organizations and town officials to address identified issues including the need for a new/expanded indoor recreational facility and amenities at neighborhood parks in Bennington. A teen center, that may or may not be incorporated in a new recreation facility, also may be studied as part of a collaborative effort with ACT, the town, and the local health care corporation.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Planning: Bicycle and pedestrian facility work described under the Transportation Projects section will be integrated with related efforts to improve community health. In addition to advancing specific projects such as expanded sidewalk systems in Manchester Center and Bennington, the BCRC will work to increase local awareness and understanding of Vermont's "complete streets" initiative.

Mixed Use Development: The BCRC completed a mixed use development study for all towns and villages in the region. The BCRC will continue to work with towns and villages support implementation of study objectives through appropriate plan and bylaw revisions as well as through development planning in downtown and village center areas.

Walkable Communities: The BCRC will work with volunteer citizen to update a study concerning development of a walking route connecting the Bennington Battle Monument and the Bennington Museum along the line of the old Corkscrew Rail Line. The BCRC also will evaluate the potential for connect existing trails (including a route along an old trolley line) in the “Walloomsac Headwaters” natural area and the Greenberg Reserve at the One World Conservation Center..

Drug Free Communities: The BCRC serves as the fiscal agent and host organization for a multi-year federal Drug Free Community (DFC) Grant implemented by the Alliance for Community Transformations. The BCRC will provide staff and administrative support for the specific projects and tasks outlined in the DFC work program.

Brownfields Projects

The BCRC was successful in securing two Brownfield Assessment grants; the period of operation will begin this year. The Commission will re-activate its Brownfields committee, identify potential sites/projects, contact property owners, conduct public outreach, retain consultant assistance, and begin site evaluations. Work is expect on up to seven environmental site assessments and up to four corrective action plans. The BCRC also will work cooperatively with the Agency of Natural Resources on any projects they pursue in the region. The BCRC will continue to monitor progress on several projects that were assessed previously, and will continue to identify sites that would benefit from assessment and/or clean-up funding.

Potential Future Projects: Ideal Fuels (Bennington), Benmont Mill lot (Bennington), Putnam Block Redevelopment, Tuttle/Bennington Brush lot and building, Johnson Controls lot, Pownal Dam (hydro).

Environmental Projects

Water Quality: Undertake a variety of activities to support water quality improvements in the region, through specific tasks identified in the scope of work that is part of the RPC agreement with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. At a minimum, the following activities will be completed:

- Provide training and outreach to municipalities in cooperation with VT ANR and VTrans.
- River Corridor/Fluvial Erosion Hazard Regulations: Fluvial Erosion Hazard zones have been mapped on the Batten Kill, Walloomsac River, Hoosic River, Mettawee River and their major tributaries. The BCRC will continue to provide outreach and coordination for the adoption of local regulations.
- Flood Hazard Area Map and Bylaw Updates: The BCRC will continue to work with towns to develop an understanding of the updated Bennington County Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM).
- Support development of tactical basin plans and serve as a key partner to the watershed coordinator and any watershed associations.
- Prepare tables characterizing flood and fluvial erosion hazard mitigation projects and draft language for how the tables would be incorporated into the resiliency elements of town plans and cross-referenced as stream stability and water quality improvement projects into tactical basin plans.

- Prepare draft river corridor maps by incorporating updates and administrative revisions to the Statewide River Corridor Base Map consistent with the *DEC Procedure for Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Protection Procedure*.
- Assist with the management of any water quality implementation projects involving improvements to municipal infrastructure, particularly improvements to local roads. Cooperate with the Bennington County Conservation District and other organizations identifying and implementing water quality improvement projects involving agricultural forestry related activities, and stormwater management on commercial properties.
- In partnership with VT DEC, towns, and water quality organizations, provide public notice and hold one or more forums to explain, investigate, discuss, and comment on concerns or support for designation of candidate Outstanding Resource Waters or candidates identified for reclassification to Class A(1) or Class B(1).
- The BCRC will work with municipalities or water quality groups to generate support or interest in additional water quality monitoring or other assessments. The BCRC will engage with a consultant on behalf of municipalities or assist organizations by performing water quality management activities.

Development Review

Act 250: Review all major Act 250 projects and participate in District Environmental Commission hearings for those deemed to have substantial regional impact as defined in the Bennington County Regional Plan. Ensure that Regional Plan policies are given full consideration in those hearings.

Section 248: Review all Section 248 projects and participate in Public Service Board hearings for those deemed to have substantial regional impact as defined in the Bennington County Regional Plan. Ensure that Regional Plan policies are given full consideration in those hearings.

Regional Plan

Comprehensive Regional Plan: The BCRC will identify and track key implementation actions that were identified in the plan and ensure that local and state plans and projects are consistent with the plan.

Local, regional, and statewide energy planning: The BCRC will continue to administer a statewide contract for eight RPCs developing new regional energy plans and will work with BCRC communities to develop new energy elements/plans that meet Act 174 determination standards.